

Uplift Atlas Preparatory Assessment Philosophy and Mission Statement

As an International Baccalaureate (IB) continuum school, Uplift Atlas Preparatory values assessment as a means to provide scholars valuable feedback to continuously improve their learning. Assessment plays an essential role in driving quality curriculum and instruction that empowers our scholars to reach their potential. Continuous feedback and reflection promote a growth-mindset to encourage a lifelong love of learning and achievement that extends beyond the classroom.

Uplift Atlas Preparatory's mission is “to create and sustain public schools of excellence that empower each scholar to reach their highest potential in college and the global marketplace and which inspire a lifelong love of learning, achievement, and service in order to positively change their world.” To that end, and in alignment with the IB’s assessment policies, we believe that assessment should be criterion-related, the most accurate demonstration of student performance, and show scholar understanding of a course’s content and skills holistically.

Assessment Beliefs

Achievement is assessed qualitatively using assessment criteria drawn from appropriate subject, course, and assessment objectives. These objectives are provided by the state of Texas and the International Baccalaureate, where applicable. IB assessment criteria are also used where applicable to derive a criterion-referenced, qualitative grade. All scholars, in all grade levels, and all content areas, should have multiple opportunities to demonstrate their growth according to IB assessment criteria. These criteria are utilized for assessments in all subject groups and culminating projects such as the MYP Personal Project and the DP Extended Essay.

We believe...

- Assessments directly inform educational planning and teaching.
- Both teachers and scholars should engage in assessment reflection to improve instructional practice and evaluate progress towards goal achievement.
- Teachers engage in collaborative planning and reflection to analyze scholar work and data to inform teaching and learning practices.
- Teachers backwards plan from assessments and make assessment criteria transparent for scholars early in the unit of inquiry.
- Assessment tasks should balance both formative assessment to guide scholar learning and summative assessment to determine scholar achievement of learning goals.
- Assessment variety ensures scholars with diverse learning styles and multiple intelligences will have multiple opportunities to demonstrate their learning.
- Performance tasks should be grounded in opportunities for scholars to authentically apply their understanding of IB global contexts, key concepts, and the unit of inquiry.
- Emphasis on higher-order thinking skills supports inquiry-based, constructivist learning while the application of Approaches to Learning supports development of non-cognitive cross-curricular skills.
- Assessment feedback should be timely, specific, and aligned to assessment criteria. It should provide guidance that enables scholars to reflect on their progress in relation to goal achievement.
- Assessment and grading practices should be made public and transparent to scholars and parents.

TYPES OF ASSESSMENTS

Formative and Summative

- **Formative Assessment** is ongoing, and used as a daily assessment that both guides scholar learning and informs the teacher of scholars' learning progress. Based on the results of the formative assessments, scholars, parents, and teachers can evaluate and respond to each scholar's learning. Formative assessment methods may include a wide range of activities designed to provide practice and reinforcement of concepts or skills being learned including but not limited to: classroom participation, collaboration and discussion, exit tickets, observation, notes, diagnostic, practice activities, charts, lab reports, quizzes, or essays.
- **Summative Assessment** occurs at the end of the learning process and is used to determine scholar achievement of learning goals against specific assessment criteria. Some examples of summative assessment include unit tests, performance tasks, portfolios, group and individual presentations, response journals, research papers, exams, and formally moderated internal assessments.

International Baccalaureate (IB) Assessments

Internal Assessments are developed by the classroom teacher using prescribed IB scoring rubrics.

- **MYP** courses rely solely on internal assessment created by classroom teachers and Uplift Education Curriculum Coordinators. Scholars will be assessed two times per school year on each MYP course's criteria. The MYP Personal Project will be first scored by the Personal Project supervisor and then moderated by an external moderator.
- In **DP** courses, each subject has one or more internal assessment components, such as oral presentations, science lab reports, math reports, or written work. Internal assessments will be scored by the classroom teacher and then moderated by an external IB moderator.

External assessments are evaluated papers and exams that are scored only by external IB examiners. IB Papers (exams), which students sit for in May each year, are external assessments; some courses may have additional external assessments. It is very important to note that students must take the external assessment (IB exams) on the assigned test date.

Local, state, and national assessments: Standardized tests, particularly multiple choice formats, are not the preferred method of assessment at Uplift Atlas Preparatory, and a variety of assessment strategies are used. Nevertheless we work to prepare scholars for those accountability and college readiness tests by ensuring scholars are exposed to both the content and format of such standardized tests. As such, scholars are given the practice necessary to be successful in a variety of test formats.

National

- **Measure of Academic Progress (MAP):** This nationally-normed test is used to set individual scholar goals and to measure growth over time in Reading, Math, Language Usage and Science.
- **Pre ACT/ACT:** This national test is used to set individual scholar goals and to measure growth over time in English, Reading, Math and Science. The ACT is also used in college admissions.
- **PSAT/SAT:** This national test assesses college readiness in Critical Reading, Math, and Writing. The SAT is used in college admissions.

State

- **State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness (STAAR)**: In addition to IB MYP and DP requirements, all scholars must meet all Texas Education Agency requirements for graduation in high school. These required exams are defined by the Texas Education Agency. The courses at Uplift Atlas Preparatory are implemented in such a way that scholars meet the Texas graduation requirements at the same time that they meet MYP and DP requirements.
- **Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS)**: TELPAS assesses the English language proficiency of K-12 English Language Learners (ELLs) in four language domains: listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

Local

- **Uplift Unit Assessments (UA)**: UAs occur periodically through the quarter. Unit Assessments (UAs) are Uplift-produced exams that align to Texas State Standards (TEKS). In grades K-10, they include an open-ended constructed response that aligns to PYP and MYP assessment criteria. Collaborative reflection upon UA data occurs in each quarter wherein teachers analyze scholar performance to adjust instructional practice and action plan.

Use of IB Rubrics and Mark Bands

Formal IB assessments are criterion-referenced. This means that a rubric is used to qualitatively assess scholar achievement. Teacher-created summative assessments in IB courses often model, in both format and subject matter, formal IB assessments. Teachers employ IB assessment criteria (rubrics) to assess scholar achievement and drive a criterion-referenced, qualitative grade. These criteria are used for assessments in all subject groups and for culminating IB projects such as MYP Personal Project and DP Extended Essay.

Standardization of Judgments

To ensure internal consistency of assigning achievement levels, teachers will regularly participate in collaborative standardization activities to reach a common understanding and application of criteria and descriptors.

Standardization activities may include:

- **Campus vertical collaboration** in which teachers of the same subject group meet to discuss a common understanding of the assessment criteria and achievement levels in order to ensure appropriate progression of the subject objectives.
- **Campus horizontal collaboration** in which teachers of the same grade level meet to discuss and reflect upon scholar progress and achievement levels within their respective grade level to increase reliability of judgments and to identify opportunities for cross-curricular collaboration.
- **Network-wide collaboration** in which teachers of the subject-group AND same grade meet to reach a shared understanding of the assessment criteria and achievement levels as it relates to scholar performance on Uplift Unit Assessments. In addition to norming their judgments using scholar work samples, teachers will analyze and reflect upon the data in order to identify action steps to help scholars reach higher achievement levels.
- **Personal Project standardization** in which any adults involved with MYP Personal Project for Year 5 (10th grade) Scholars will have the opportunity to standardize assessment of the Personal Project criteria in order to ensure internal consistency and reliability of judgments.

Academic Honesty

The Uplift Education academic honor code is based upon the belief that true learning depends on honest assessment of scholar growth and performance. Honest assessment is in the best interest of all members of the Uplift Atlas community: scholars, parents, teachers, and administrators. For more information, please reference Uplift Atlas’s Academic Honesty Policy

Homework/Late Work Homework provides scholars opportunities to practice skills and build knowledge in a meaningful way. It is the belief that the primary basis of grades should be the achievement of skills and knowledge. If measures beyond mastery are included within a grade (such behaviors such as *IB Approaches to Learning* or *Habits of Scholarship*), these measurements should represent only a minor basis of any grade and be categorized in isolation from the assessments measuring mastery. For more information, please reference the Uplift Education 6-12 Grading Philosophy and Practices.

Grade Recording and Reporting

Scholars and families are given formal progress reports on a regular basis, at the midpoint of each quarter in the middle and high schools, as well as informal progress reports as needed. Grades are published weekly through our PowerSchool Parental Portal and can be accessed by parents and scholars at any time. Grades are formally reported every quarter (9 weeks), semester (18 weeks), and at the end of the year (36 weeks). These reports are according to a state-mandated 100 point scale. Uplift Atlas Preparatory utilizes PowerSchool for the capture, recording, and reporting of grades.

Formal Grade Reporting Scales for Middle and Upper Schools, Grades Six through Twelve

The state of Texas requires that formal grade reports be issued using a 100-point scale. Where applicable, assignment grades are derived using the appropriate IB grading criteria to determine an IB grade for assignments, which is then converted to a grade on a 100 point scale in order to meet state of Texas requirements for grade reporting. Suggested grade conversions follow.

Texas Reporting 100-point Grade Scale		
Number Grade	Letter Grade	Descriptor
90-100	A	Excellent
80-89	B	Good
70-79	C	Satisfactory
0-69	F	Unsatisfactory

MYP and DP Grade Reporting Scale: IB grades are determined through qualitative assessment utilizing IB assessment criteria. In the Middle Years and Diploma Program, IB grades are formally reported each semester, using a scale of 1-7, shown below:

IB Grade	Brief Descriptor	Detailed Descriptor
7	Outstanding Achievement	Produces high-quality, frequently innovative work. Communicates comprehensive, nuanced understanding of concepts and contexts. Consistently demonstrates sophisticated critical and creative thinking . Frequently transfers knowledge and skills with independence and expertise in a variety of complex classroom and real-world situations.
6	Excellent Achievement	Produces high-quality, occasionally innovative work. Communicates extensive understanding of concepts and contexts. Demonstrates critical and creative thinking, frequently with sophistication . Uses knowledge and skills in familiar and unfamiliar classroom and real-world situations, often with independence .
5	Good Achievement	Produces generally high-quality work. Communicates secure understanding of concepts and contexts. Demonstrates critical and creative thinking, sometimes with sophistication . Uses knowledge and skills in familiar classroom and real-world situations and, with support , some unfamiliar real-world situations..
4	Satisfactory Achievement	Produces good-quality work . Communicates basic understanding of most concepts and contexts with few misunderstandings and minor gaps. Often demonstrates basic critical and creative thinking . Uses knowledge and skills with some flexibility in familiar classroom situations, but requires support in unfamiliar situations
3	Limited Achievement	Produces work of an acceptable quality . Communicates basic understanding of many concepts and contexts, with occasionally significant misunderstandings or gaps. Begins to demonstrate some basic critical and creative thinking . Is often inflexible in the use of knowledge and skills, requiring support even in familiar classroom situations.
2	Very Limited Achievement	Produces work of limited quality . Expresses misunderstandings or significant gaps in understanding for many concepts and contexts. Infrequently demonstrates critical or creative thinking . Generally inflexible in the use of knowledge and skills, infrequently applying knowledge and skills.
1	Minimal Achievement	Produces work of very limited quality . Conveys many significant misunderstandings or lacks understanding of most concepts and contexts. Very rarely demonstrates critical or creative thinking. Very inflexible, rarely using knowledge or skills.

Support for Scholars with Diverse Learning needs

Students possess diverse learning needs, and additional support is provided for scholars with learning differences, scholars who speak English as a second language, and/ or possess extraordinary intellectual gifts and talents. Uplift Atlas provides a variety of accommodations and modifications of instruction and assessment to enable each scholar to reach his or her highest potential. Further, teachers are encouraged to differentiate where appropriate in order to allow all scholars to demonstrate learning in various forms. For more information, please reference Uplift Atlas's Language Policy and Special Education Policy.

Review Process

The Uplift Education Assessment Policy is reviewed on an annual basis by the Network IB Coordinator and a team of Assessment Coordinators. High-level feedback and recommendations will be communicated to campus pedagogical leadership teams in order to be revised (as necessary) and communicated with teachers. The review of school policies will be included in the annual campus-based training for any new teachers.

References

The Diploma Programme: From principles to practice. IBO, 2009

Guidelines for developing a school assessment policy in the Diploma Programme. IBO, 2010.

Programme standards and practices. IBO, 2014.

Assessment Policy for Brooke Point High School. Stafford County Public Schools.

Assessment Policy for Vanguard High School. Marion County Public Schools.

Connections to other policies

Uplift Education Academic Honor Code.

Uplift Education Grading Philosophy and Practices for Grades 6-12.

Uplift Education Language Policy.

Uplift Education Special Education Policies.